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INTEGRAL[®] Yoga

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Integral Yoga and You

INTEGRAL YOGA Magazine is the official organ of the Integral Yoga Institutes, Groups, Teaching Centers and Satchidananda Ashrams. These centers are vehicles through which Sri Swami Satchidanandaji's teachings of Integral Yoga are lived and shared. Conducting ongoing programs in the various aspects of Yoga—including Hatha, Raja, Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana Yogas—the centers also offer instruction on Yogic diet and other related topics. There are open classes, courses, teachers' training programs, universal worship services, and also retreats for beginners and more advanced students. Those interested are invited to call or visit the centers, and a live-in program is also possible.

Besides their teaching function, the Ashrams also provide an opportunity for an experience in total Yogic living. The ashram in Pomfret Center, Connecticut has a health clinic, national audio-video and book publishing and distribution services, a natural foods store, a two-acre organic garden, an Integral Yoga School for children, and a number of cottage industries where members practice selfless service. There is also, at this time, an ashram in Santa Barbara, California.

For more information, to arrange a Yoga program for any group, or to be put on our mailing list, please feel free to contact any of the centers listed on the inside front cover. We are here to serve you.

OM SHANTHI OM PEACE

Letters to Sri Gurudev



Since I have taken so much from you and the ashram and its many members, I feel it is time for me to give and share with you what I have gained as a result.

Recently, I finished a beginners' course in *Hatha Yoga* from one of your members. I learned more than asanas from him. He was more than a fine teacher. He was a beautiful human being, and we will miss him and his class very much.

I feel to you most of all I owe my deepest gratitude. For many years I practiced and studied my own religion faithfully. Yet, it was you who brought the first rays of truth to me. Through you I have come not only to understand the teachings of Christ, but for the first time I realize at least a bit what the basic essence of religion really is. Though I feel I am in the kindergarten of learning, it is for me a new and hopeful beginning.

For all your satsangs that have helped to open my mind and my heart, for all the people at the ashram who have helped answer the questions of a skeptic, and all those outside the ashram who have supported me—I thank you for bringing your teachings and community within my reach.

Words cannot tell all I feel or adequately express my thoughts or feelings.

—Nat

What a blessing! I have been re-connecting myself to Judaism. Without your teaching, and the glorious vedanta of Chinmaya, I would have still been unable to see anything in my own religion. Thank you, thank you!

It is a joy to me, and so important for the children. Now, as any good Jewish mama should, I can raise the kids with a love for their religion—and with the understanding of a Yogi.

Ah, Swamiji—this kind of thing, I feel, is one of the main reasons for your being in America. Praise God!

—J. D., Perkasio, Pa.

My loving greetings as we enter the beautiful season of Easter!

These days have been very good ones, with my practices going along well. I have been inspired to write more poetry and I enclose some to share with you. I think these express just where I am at. I think you inspired me to see the meanings contained in words. Writing seems to be my *Karma Yoga*, my way of carrying out my mission. I pray that through these words, people may receive hope and joy.

I find myself saying throughout the day, "Here I am, Lord"—with all my good qualities and weaknesses and feelings, whatever they be. Then I know the Lord says, "Trust me" and I am ready to hear His teaching. I feel that you are leading me to be attuned to the Holy Spirit and this brings peace.

Thank you, once again Beloved Gurudev for the grace of the
(letters continued on page 26)

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Sri Swami Satchidananda

SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA is a master of Yoga, a world spiritual teacher, and Guru of the students of Integral Yoga. He is dedicated to the ecumenical movement, his motto being "Truth is One, paths are many." His main residences are in Pomfret Center, Connecticut during summer and Santa Barbara, California in the winter. He also travels widely, sharing with people through every possible medium: lectures, conferences, radio, TV and newspaper interviews, books and visits to schools, seminaries, rehabilitation centers and many other groups.

The Garden of Beliefs

Sri Swami Satchidananda

"God has a thousand names, or rather He is nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. All worship the same Spirit but, as all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to his associations and, He being the indweller, all-powerful and omniscient, knows our inmost feeling and responds to us according to our deserts. Man can only conceive God within the limitation of his own mind. But God is all-embracing and therefore beyond human ken."

-Mahatma Gandhi

Ecumenism is Integral Yoga. Though we follow one teacher, we learn to respect all other teachers. The teachings may vary, but the central Teaching is always the same—to know our True Selves. That is the first and foremost goal. Once we know the Self, then it is easy to know all other things.

Until we "know" our Selves, all our knowing would be a big "no". You know not. Because we try to know everything through our conditioned minds, all our knowing will be conditioned, prejudiced, limited, colored, and jaundiced. Real knowing is only with the pure, neutral, and unconditioned mind.

We should have that clear and uncolored vision, and that

is the purpose underlying all these practices—to remove all the coloring. The mind should be freed from all these limitations and preconditioned ideas. Many times I have seen the benefit of a neutral outlook. Visitors to the ashrams sometimes arrive with prejudicial ideas about Yoga, ashrams, and spiritual communities. They come with scepticism, sometimes even with a negative feeling, but I'm glad to say that, often, they also come with an open mind to find out what Yoga is. Even though they are prejudiced and conditioned, at least they temporarily remove that coloring and are able to see a totally different picture. So it is important for us to keep



the mind clean.

That's the only condition for all your spiritual practices—decondition yourself. In a way, even in the name of spiritual practices, each group will be blaming the other as brainwashed. But we are all brainwashed in some way or another. What is it you call the "deprogramming"? Simply another type of brainwashing. There was one paint; now you wash it with another paint, is it not so? Both are brainwashing.

We literally *should* wash the brain. Wash it clean of all colors and conditions. Don't merely switch from one prejudice to another; simply see clearly for yourself. That is the purpose behind all the teachings—whether they originated from Moses, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, Shankara, Krishna, Rama, or Siva—keep the mind clean. *Yogas chitta vritti nirodhah*, the restraint of the modifications of the mindstuff is Yoga.

With all that, even though all religions teach essentially

the same message, we still can appreciate the differences. Just as we want a good garden to have multifarious flowers, we appreciate the many languages and cultures, varieties of dance and music. If you have only chrysanthemums for acres and acres, you wouldn't even call it a garden; you would call it a farm. The garden may be smaller and not have that many flowers. Because it has a variety, you call it beautiful. See the difference? If you have only one kind of flower, it's no more a garden.

We are not all alike and the same. Imagine that we all become exactly like each other. What would we do with the male and female? Even that would become one then. It would be terrible. I can't even imagine how the world would be. So, variety is needed.

In the Hindu philosophy, you can see various approaches, not only one. Sometimes we even see contrary expressions. One great saint might seem to contradict

the other saint. But if we go deeply into that, to find out why they contradict each other, we can easily understand that they are both talking about the same goal and showing the different approaches.

EAST MEETS WEST

Certainly, different paths can lead to the same goal. Take the example of two people leaving from the same place, one walking East and the other walking West. Going in opposite directions, one tells the other, "I don't want to follow you. I just want to do something exactly opposite to what you are doing. Since you are going East, I am going West." It's fine, let him do it.

Suppose they continue, each in his own direction, without missing even a single step, where will they end up? Face to face. "All roads lead to Rome." We often come across this idea.

Shankara, the great Acharya who was the exponent of Advaita (non-dualistic) philosophy, summarized the entire Upanishadic teaching, "*Brahma satyam. Jagat anitya. Jivo brahmaivana aparaha.*" *Brahman* is the *satyam*, meaning that the Absolute One is the Truth. *Jagat*, which you see as manifestation, what you see externally, is *anitya*, or illusion—not the Real. You are seeing the unreal side of the Real. Not that it is not there. It is there, but you see it differently. Looking at a structure, you may see it as a platform; I see it as wood. Though all things are made of the same, basic substance, we give them different names. So, the world is just name and

form. That is what you see.

If you go beyond the name and form, you just know the same truth. When you observe waves, foam, bubbles, spray, icebergs, and so on, you are not really seeing different things. Instead, you are just seeing the sea. From different modifications we get different names. So, that is *jagat anitya*, the world illusion. In that respect, what you see superficially is unreal. But, in the worldly sense, it has its own reality. "*Lautika drishti*", he puts it, the worldly vision. But "*paramar-tika drishti*", the inner vision, the true vision, will show you that it's all nothing but the same. Therefore: "*Jivo brahmaiva na aparaha*". Even the *jiva*, even the you who sees the outside things, is not different from that *Brahman*. It is one and the same.

SWEET ANT

Another teacher, trying to explain the same ancient scripture, said that Shankaracharya's explanation may be completely true. However, the teacher continued, personally he wouldn't want to experience it. It may be true that everything is One, but he couldn't see himself enjoying it. Imagine an ant eating candy. Without looking anywhere else, it concentrates on eating the candy. Eventually, the ant is going to become the candy itself, because what you concentrate on you become. As the teacher said, "I don't want that to happen. I just want to continue being an ant and keep on eating the candy. I don't want Shankara's

philosophy, because I'm a little frightened of it. If I am going to become candy itself, why should I go and eat? No, I don't want it."

That is another approach. Such a devotee wants to be a devotee always. He wants to go near God. He wants to become similar to God, parallel to God, but he doesn't want to *become* God. There would be no charm in life then, no love making. "I can't love my God if I myself am going to become God. For that reason, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who lived very recently, says that the path of knowledge and nondualism, according to which you become the One ultimately, is a dry approach. You don't enjoy anything; you are just that, and there ends the matter. But devotion is more beautiful.

INNER SOUNDS

Those who have directly experienced the truth say that it cannot be perceived by the mind or expressed by speech. Still, we depend upon the mind for understanding, despite the fact that even the most subtle phenomena which the mind can perceive are very gross when compared to the basic essence. So, when the mind attempts to understand the un-understandable essence, it has to limit the unlimited. The most subtle expression which the mind can perceive is the Sound. The Vedas call it the *Nadam*, and the Bible calls it the Word. Even this basic sound cannot be directly known, but you can see it expressed as the Light. The very sound, itself, creates the conditions for the

illumination, or the Light.

This is called the *bindu*, which is just a speck of light. As light it can be seen, but in the level beyond the light it cannot. It is heard, but what we hear through the physical ear is not even the beginning of the sound. The Sound which we are talking about is much more subtle than what we hear. What we hear is the audible sound, but there are inaudible sounds which can be heard within. Even your thinking creates sounds. Every thought is a sound, and when you think out loud, you speak it out. Only when it comes out of the throat do you hear it. You call that "sound", but it is only the end result of the sound which has started within.

The way to understand and realize this is to use the help of some outside symbol. That is the reason why we have all the various temples, symbols, images, services, wavings of lights and incense, and ringing of bells. Those are all outside symbols which should ultimately help us to feel, see, and hear the same within. When we learn to meditate properly, when we learn to clean the mind and focus it inward, we will get all these experiences. For example, all the sounds which we ordinarily hear—the flute, waves, wind, drums, bells, bugles—can be heard within. Through the audible sound, we can hear the sound within. We make our own sound, hear the outside sound we have created, then learn to hear the subtle Sound created by the Cosmic Intelligence. So, the outside symbols simply help us to realize that within.

Ultimately, these external

things are only aids. They help at least to imagine what you should be hearing and seeing inside. In a way, they are crude images which were given by those who saw and heard that within. Even our chanting, "Om, Amen, Ameen", is just crude when compared to what they actually heard, because it is impossible for you to express what you heard within. You have to limit it with your language which cannot truly express the Unlimited. That is why people say that nobody has ever said anything about God clearly, because you cannot talk about God. The minute you begin to talk you are simply twisting the pure, original truth.

SEE THE LIGHT

Even if the people who have seen it, captured it in their mental cameras, developed it, and projected it on the screen, still you have not really seen it. An entire temple with its worships and services are simple projections of what they caught in their experiences. All those images and symbols were not merely intellectually created. They saw it within and they tried to tell you what they had seen. So, in that sense, they may describe it as light, brilliant sunlight, the moon, or even lightning. In different ways, they expressed the same inner experience.

There again, you cannot go sit outside and always look at the sun. You cannot have lightning always, so for our sake we still limit it to our capacities and use a candle-light. We allow it to represent a universal symbol, the Inner Light, so that we may

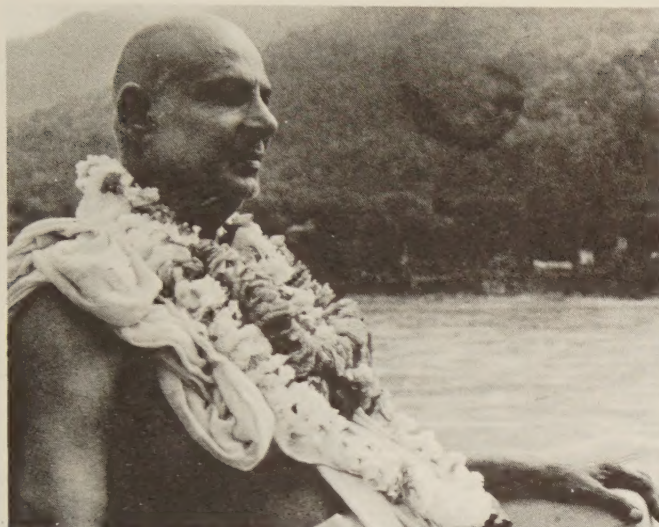
experience it.

UNDERSTANDING THE UNITY

By using the light, we don't negate the other symbols. The purpose of ecumenism is not to have only one flag or one religion. When things become uniform, we become bored and don't appreciate life anymore. But, while enjoying the variety, we can try to understand the unity. However, if you don't know the unity, you won't enjoy the variety. Instead, you will always be fighting. The true purpose of ecumenism is to stop the fighting.

The individual is free to choose whatever symbol or image he prefers. By choosing the Light, we are using a universal symbol. The Light is universal and our way is universal. We believe in the various signs, symbols, and approaches. Eventually, they all bring the Light. You are in Light, and you are called "Enlightened".

Ultimately, we are all aiming for the same thing. We all walk towards the same Goal. All the rivers ultimately flow into the same sea. Why do you claim, "Only my river and not yours"? You have never seen my river flowing into the sea; you only saw *your* river. So without even seeing my river, you say that only your river flows to the sea. Not only that, but remember that, after flowing to the sea, all the rivers become the same seawater. All the different rivers are running towards the same sea, and all the teachings of the various traditions point towards the same goal. That is the Truth. *Om Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi.*



Diversity Is the Order of Creation

Yoga is an aid to the practice of the basic spiritual truths in all religions. The practice of Yoga is purely spiritual and universal. It is not opposed to any religion or any sacred church and does not contradict anyone's sincere faith. To be a Yogin means to abide continuously in God and to live at peace with men.

One road or path to the Supreme is as good as any other road or path. Cows have different colors, but the color of milk is one. There are different kinds of roses, but the scent is one. Religion is one, but many are its forms of practice. Diversity is the order of creation, and religion is no exception.

Religion is a life of meditation. Religion is life in God. It is not dogma, nor creed, nor theology. It is not merely a belief or emotion. Religion is not merely a little prayer

which one does when he suffers from severe intestinal colic or chronic dysentery. It is pre-eminently a life of goodness and service. He who is loving, kind, pious, and truthful, he who is endowed with faith and devotion, is truly religious.

Let not personal bias, force of convention, or the opinions of fanatics and sectarians blind your vision into a narrow view of religion. You must be able to differentiate the essentials from the non-essentials through the power of pure reason and discrimination. Then only can you be happy. The essentials of all religions are one and the same. They differ only in non-essentials.

Truth is neither Hindu, nor Mohammedan, nor Buddhist, not Christian! Truth is one, homogeneous, eternal substance. The follower of the religion of Truth walks on the path of light, peace, wisdom, power, and bliss.

Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj (1887-1963), the Guru of Sri Swami Sat-chidananda, was the very embodiment of Universality and Ecumenism. In his every thought, word, and deed, he served God and His Creation.

The House of Hope

Brother David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B.



When a word is being tossed around as much as "ecumenism" is being tossed around today, it is often helpful to look for its roots. The word "ecumenical" is rooted in the Greek word for "house". This is also true for the words "economy" and "ecology". All three terms point to a reality which Gary Snyder calls "Earth Household". As we become aware that our earth is one great household, we must face the challenge to live accordingly. This demands a new relationship to our environment based on reverence and frugality; it demands what Fritz Schumacher calls "economics as if people mattered" (*Small is Beautiful*); and it will make us raise the basic question of ecumenism; what kind of world-wide house could possibly accomodate all those who, in so many different ways, want to worship God?

The answer I would like to suggest is this: our house of world-wide worship will have to be a house of hope. Only

hope can build that house, because only hope, rightly understood, can hold together the paradox of religion. Being religious means both that we find a home for the heart and that, in T. S. Eliot's words, "We shall not cease from exploration" (*Four Quartets* 4:5:239). St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, died for the truth that God does not dwell in houses built by human hands (*Acts* 7:48 ff). "What house will you build for Me? says the Lord," Stephen quoted from the Old Testament (*I Kings* 17:24), before he died as witness that being religious means being on the move.

*We must be still and still
moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper
communion
Through the dark cold and the
empty desolation*

-T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*,
2:5:204-207

And yet, when in the midst of that empty desolation we catch a glimpse of the Divine Light, our heart cries out, like Peter on Mount Tabor, "How good it is for us to be here!" (Mt. 17:4). And the very next thought is "let us build here!" In the Old Testament, too, Jacob calls out: "How awe-inspiring is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (*Genesis* 28:17). He, too, immediately thinks of building. He sets up the stone which was his pillow while he had the dream vision, and says, "This stone, which I have set up as a monument, shall be God's house." (*Genesis* 28:22).

If we look closely, these two Bible stories express an insight that belongs to all religious traditions: only hope can build God's house. Jacob sets up a milestone on the road, as it were, and calls it "Bethel", the House of God. And the three tabernacles which Peter offers to build on Mount Tabor are *sukkoth*, wayfarers' tents, which faithful Jews still build year after year to remember the time of their wilderness wandering, when in the midst of the "dark cold and the empty desolation" God's Presence was closer than ever. The house which hope builds combines in a unique way the security of love and the adventure of faith.

This theme is expressed with great tenderness in the traditional rule for building the *sukkoth*, that little booth adorned with fruit and branches, where a Jewish family will eat and drink and sing together for nine days each year to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Even the poorest will build that

little festive tent. They will build it on the landing of some fire escape, if they have no other space, in the crowded tenement houses of the Lower East Side of Manhattan. And this is the rule for building it; make the walls not too dense; you should still be able to look through to see your neighbor. And make the roof loose enough to look through to the stars.

Two opposing tendencies within us make us want to break these simple rules: our tendency to drift—for the drifter doesn't build at all—and our tendency to entrench ourselves firmly behind solid walls. Both are forms of fear in disguise. We fear to be still, and we fear to be "still and still moving". Hope alone "moves perpetually in its stillness" (*Four Quartets* 1: 5:43). Hope is the daughter of a twofold courage, the courage to build and the courage to build lightly. Hope will build a roof without losing sight of the stars; hope will build walls without losing sight of our neighbors. That is why hope alone is able to build the house of ecumenism, where God truly dwells with us, because we truly dwell together.

Drifters cannot build. They lack an anchorage one needs to be creative. True hope is so firmly anchored in the courage and trust of faith that it will set afloat a whole fleet of new hopes each time old hopes go down. But drifters don't have the courage to give shape to their dreams, to build as they travel. They may spend the night under a roof that is not their own, but when the morning comes they will drift on, fearful to commit themselves.

(continued on page 25)



in his footsteps: part 6

Caravan South: Stories of the Lord

A pilgrimage to India
and Sri Lanka
by Prahaladan Mandelkorn

This continues the account of devotees accompanying Sri Swami Satchidananda on a seven-week journey through India and Sri Lanka (Ceylon) in winter of 1977.

After our dawn visit to Tirupathi Temple, we drive for hours into the lush, green South Indian countryside, an hour or so past lunchtime. Most of us are pretty hungry when we finally stop. At first, I think it is just another delay for some bullocks blocking the roadway or farmers drying their crops in the middle of the road. We don't seem to be getting anywhere, so I open the car door for a look. Then I see we're at the entrance to a small village, which turns out to be Tiruvalam. It soon is clear that Yogi Sivananda Mouna Swamigal (Tamil uses *Swamigal* for *Swami*), the guru of the community, has organized quite a reception.

It appears that the entire

population for many miles around has turned out to greet Swami Satchidananda and his devotees. We are welcomed like royalty as the people, in many hundreds, crowd the village streets. They hold large, colorful orange-and-white umbrellas over Gurudev's head as he slowly walks up the main streets of the village. Drums are beating frantically and horns are playing. Every few yards, housewives dash out and pour water on Gurudev's feet as a devotional offering. They wave flames before him, and each bows to touch his feet three times. This happens repeatedly as he walks sedately, and ever-patiently, through the large gathering. As we crowd behind our master, following in the glory of his procession, we are awed by the respect and eagerness of the crowd. They are treating him as if they were receiving God himself! As far as they are concerned we are his worthy



disciples, and we too are garlanded.

The procession leads to the peaceful little ashram of Sivananda Mouna Swamigal, a lean, dark-skinned, wiry man, in his early fifties I'd say (but who can say about a guru?). His short-cropped grey hair sticks out in tufts, and he has a grey salt-and-pepper goatee on his wonderful face—warm smile and bright eyes. For many years he has worn only a burlap loin cloth. Once in a while, he eats only a bit of pulse which he grinds himself. He's an ascetic Yogi, a *siddha* (accomplished one) we are told, who has lived austere for many years. For fourteen years, for example, he didn't speak and is thus known as *Mouna Swami* (Silent Renunciate). These days, however, he speaks and nicely handles the affairs of this entire town which is fiercely devoted to him with loyalty and love. He and

Gurudev seem to like each other quite a bit and joke together.

DON'T SLIDE THE BOOK

In the crowded courtyard of the ashram, Sri Mouna Swamigal crowns our Gurudev and presents each of us with a simple, white cotton shawl. As he wraps it around each person, Gurudev introduces us speaking in Tamil. As many villagers as possible crowd into the courtyard. Tamil, the language of this part of South India, is also Gurudev's mother tongue. When we were in North India, he almost always spoke English and we got a little spoiled. Now we are beginning to learn to listen and watch without always understanding what he is saying.

Sivananda Mouna Swami seems high spirited, frequently joking. Now he throws holy ash into each of our mouths, then reads us the menu of our forthcoming luncheon—forty eight different types of food! "You see now", says Gurudev, "why I didn't let you stop for lunch". The people of the town all wanted the honor of serving us, so their guru held a lottery and the winning family, the Joharis, would become our hosts.

We sit on the floor before the large banana-leaf plates. Sri Swamigal introduces us to Sri Panalal Johari, our host. Then Mouna Swami personally removes the cover from each setting, revealing literally dozens of delicacies. Respecting the custom, we use only our right hands for eating.

Afterwards, we prepare to leave the ashram, but not before signing our names in a large guest book. Our host spreads



Sri Panalal Johari, Sri Gurudev, and Sri Mouna Swamigal

the great volume open on the paved ground and we line up. It's crowded and hard to hear what's happening under the canopy where the two gurus are laughing together. One of our group bends over and pulls the book close for signing. "Don't slide the book", says Mouna Swami, and Gurudev translates into English. The next person comes up, bends forward, and pulls the book up close to sign her name. "Don't slide the book", repeats our host. A third person comes up; he too was out of earshot. It's hard to explain, but you guessed it—he *drags* the book a few inches across the cement to sign it. Mouna Swami turns to Gurudev and, while looking at us, says something with a chuckle. Gurudev explains, "He says I spoil you all". We think they're joking, but we'll soon be hearing more about this.

Now we head to Tiruvanamalli, to a famous temple dedicated to Lord Siva. We arrive at the lovely temple in the early evening and enter the Hallway of a

Thousand Pillars, many hundreds of years old.

STORIES OF THE LORD

Legend has it that Parvathi, Lord Siva's consort, did her years of penance while Siva was deep in meditation. Here she developed her own devotional and spiritual nature, so that next time she met Siva she would attract him not only through her physical beauty but by her spiritual beauty, which ultimately would win him.

This is also the location, according to Hindu legend, where Siva and Parvathi put their two sons to a contest. Whoever could go around the world first would win—Ganesh, the elephant-headed god who rides on a little forest rat, or Muruga the ever-vigorous youth, vital and strong, who rides on a peacock. "No contest", thought Muruga, as he sailed off like lightning. But Ganesh, who represents divine wisdom, simply rode his chariot around his Mother and Father while they were still standing at the

site of this temple. When Muruga returned from his flight around the universe, Ganesh claimed the victory because, as he said, "Siva and Parvathi are the universe". Siva represents the unmanifest God, the Absolute or the Essence, and Parvathi is God as the manifested creation. To go around them is to circle the entire universe, both manifest and unmanifest. Understanding this now, Muruga decided to do penance for his pride. According to the story, he renounced and became the first *sannyasi*, or renunciate.

Following our teacher, we walk through this ancient temple as he points out different things and recalls these tales. At one place, he shows us a tall tower and tells us another story. Once a poet wrote beautiful songs of praise to God in the form of Kumar (which is another name for Muruga). The poet desperately wanted to see God but was never successful. In great despair, he decided to give up his life. He leapt from the high tower—Gurudev points up to the very spot from where the poet jumped—onto this cement court where we are now standing. But just as he was plummeting toward the ground, Kumar appeared, caught him, and saved his life. "My dear devotee", he said, "I want you to go on living and praising God with more of your beautiful songs."

The next morning, at a hotel in Chidambaram, we rise early for another day of temple visits. Gurudev is already up and sitting in the lounge. Looking out the front window he seems preoccupied, so most of us decide not to disturb him with our greetings.

ICY TEACHINGS

During breakfast he advises the men, when entering local temples, to observe the custom of removing their shirts and wrapping their top cloths or shawls around their waists. The idea is that one is baring oneself before God.

Breakfast is very quiet, even ominous. Afterwards, Gurudev finds fault with practically each one of us. I make the mistake of asking him for clarification. "Do we take off both undershirt and top shirt?" He straightens me out quickly. "You who were sitting closest to me and didn't even listen!" It's cold steel this morning. He goes on from one to the other pointing out our carelessness during the trip, our lack of consciousness, our rudeness and insensitivity in the temples. He doesn't bother mentioning that people had been bumping into him yesterday in the Tirupathi Temple, but I felt at that time that he was aware of it. It was just another example of our uncenteredness.

Until this point on the pilgrimage, we hadn't had a hard blow from the master *en masse*—though occasionally some individuals had been upbraided by their guru for this or that. "I can be tough", he had warned us on the way to Rishikesh. It's not so much that he says the words, but the strength and accuracy. When the one you cherish most goes right to the quick, the heart empties.

He continues, "You come downstairs and don't even greet me. I know the trouble, it's too much familiarity. You don't know how to carry yourselves in the temples either. I hold you

*Saint
Ramalingam
Swamigal*

people responsible who have been here before and know the right way". In this way Shanthi, Amrit-ananda Ma, and Brother Sridhar, three of our senior members, get a dash of icy water too.

When we arrive at the temple later that morning, we are a subdued and well-chastened lot. Some are smarting and feelings are hurt, but it's just what we needed.

TEMPLE OF LIGHT

We drive off to the Jyothi Temple in Vadalur that has been rebuilt with the generous help of Mr. N. Mahalingam. The work has been done in honor of the late South Indian saint, Ramalingam Swamigal, who used to encourage his followers to worship the one Light instead of the various forms. *Light* is the one great symbol that all faiths and denominations have in common, and in his day Ramalingam Swamigal ushered in a renewal of ecumenical attitudes. Our host, Mr. Mahalingam, besides being an eminent devotee of Sri Gurudev, is also a devotee of the late master, and we visited the renewed temple and did *pūja* (worship) to God who is symbolized by light there.

Though I still felt myself to be a stranger in India and among the different Indian religious customs, it seemed to me that the temples we had visited



earlier—with all the ornate, ancient symbols, carved deities, ritual chanting, and so forth—are perhaps akin to the moods you feel in Roman Catholic, Orthodox Jewish, or Greek Orthodox forms of worship—with all the mystery, incense, forms, chanting, and color of those styles of orthodoxy. Whereas the Jyothi Temple of Mr. Mahalingam had a different atmosphere—newer, simpler, less arcane or ritualistic. It seemed almost a different denomination, similar to some of our Protestant or Reform Jewish styles of worship. Of course it's all the same Light, the same God—but different people approach Him according to their own temperaments.

After the peaceful Jyothi Temple we visit a school for

orphans—from childhood to their teens—where Gurudev speaks. Beforehand, the children greet us in two columns through which we now pass. The little girls are dressed in colorful red, blue, and orange blouses and skirts, their black hair braided, dark eyes large and round. The boys look eager and interested. Innocent faces of youth are everywhere, tan, coffee-colored skin, dark slacks and white shirts. They are full of that wonderful open-to-learn energy. Finally I understand the term, "innocence of youth". It's a joy to be with these children. Even though we don't speak each other's languages, the feeling is there.

NO WORDS NEEDED

Afterwards, during lunch, something still gnaws on my mind—the reprimand which happened hours before. If there were just a way for me to say, "I'm sorry, Pa". How do you do that in the midst of all these festivities, hundreds of people, and a crowded schedule? I observe Gurudev after lunch as he goes out to wash his hands. He is nearby. The moment is casual and informal. I quickly kneel and touch my forehead to his feet. He lovingly slaps me on the back. Jokingly, he hits me again, this time on my notebook which I thought was tucked away inconspicuously in the waistband of my trousers. When I look up, I see him smiling into my eyes, and I know I can let that last incident go. Sometimes no words are needed. It's clear sailing today.

The sky is clear blue overhead, without a cloud. The day is warming and children are

everywhere in the schoolyard, trying to get as many of us as possible to sign their autograph books. It's pandemonium before Gurudev comes out. As they swarm about him, he tells us to stop signing their books, then orders the children to sit down and be still, refusing to speak until they finally quiet down. He really can handle crowds and change their energy, as we have been observing repeatedly on this journey.

A SERIOUS PRAYER

A friend from the school translates. Gurudev is asking the children whether they pray. After one boy answers "Yes", Gurudev asks him what he prays for. "I ask always for food", the boy responds. The other children are laughing at his confession, but it's not so funny in a land with so much starvation and natural disasters. I am reminded of our prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread".

Gurudev teaches them the art of prayer. I wonder if he is sharing with them one of his favorite prayers, "Lord, let me always remember that I'm your child." Then we pile into our cars, and the children circle each vehicle with love and laughter. Now we're coming to the end of the three-day caravan, heading on toward Pondicherry on the Southeastern Coast of India.

Next installment, the pilgrims visit the home and mahasamadhi site of the late Sri Aurobindo. There they sit to meditate in the late master's room, then head for adventures in Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

New Perspectives on the Past

Swami Lalitananda Ma

As a growing child, I was happy with my family and my home. Despite today's social problems, I was fortunate to be spared many of the usual pitfalls while growing into adulthood. However, there was one exception—the age-old problem of developing values which did not always conform to what my family "thought best for me". Like many of my generation, a strong difference of opinion about lifestyle, and an intense confrontation with my mother, led me to a nine-year separation from all my relatives. Despite the emotional pain involved, it began an enriching period of growth. With no one to fall back on, I had to learn to make my own decisions and take full responsibility for the consequences.

Five years ago, I met Sri Gurudev and felt drawn to him. Immediately, I began to apply his teachings to all areas of my life. After moving into the Ashram, I soon realized that, at some point, I would have to resolve the break in family

ties, since nothing can be left ignored on our spiritual journey home to God.

In the words of many a saint, "God works in mysterious and unforeseen ways". While working for the Ashram, selling candles at a fair in Boston, I "accidentally" encountered some relatives who lived nearby. Thanks to the Grace of the Guru, this meeting led to a joyous, surprising reunion with the entire family on Christmas, 1978.

As a result of this reunion, I recently accompanied my mother to Baltimore, Maryland, to visit the aunt on my father's side. My dad passed away sixteen years ago, and it had been that long since I'd seen anyone on that side of the family. Aunt Minnie, his only surviving sister, is now eighty-seven years old. To my great delight, she was in good spirits and excellent health, despite a pacemaker operation she underwent last fall.

She took one look at me and, seeing how well and happy I was, her face lit up with joy. As we

were enjoying the summer afternoon on her front porch, she asked me, in her soft Southern accent, what I was doing in life. I told her about Yoga, about the blessing of knowing a spiritual master like Sri Gurudev, and how happy I am in the monastic life.

Alive with interest as she looked through one of Sri Gurudev's books, she was struck with his picture and remarked, "I can see in his eyes he is a very very holy man. Please go back and thank him for me for allowing you to come down here. I feel God sent you here today, because you've answered a few questions no one has ever been able to answer for me. Now I understand all I ever needed to know." After our conversation, she looked at me with great love. "I can see you are not the same person I knew before", she said. "What a beautiful transformation has taken place in your life. I see you are filled with the consciousness of God. You just radiate it!"

Most of my relatives now understand, intellectually, my Yogic way of living, but Aunt Minnie understands it with her heart. Both sides of my family have always considered her a saint. Except for Sri Gurudev, she is the only person I've ever known who—despite many hardships and calamities—has always been content with her lot in life. Through all circumstances, she would only think of how blessed she was! No wonder that she understood the Yogic philosophy so well.

She has lived her whole

life with an ecumenical attitude—always universal, generous, selfless, and loving. No matter how others may have treated her, she has never held a grudge, or uttered an unkind word to anyone, or about anyone. Visiting with her inspired me to recall the rich spiritual heritage passed on to me from my aunt, father, and grandfather. They all shared this same, beautiful outlook, and were incredible examples of unconditional love.

When leaving, I presented her with a booklet, *Introduction to Integral Yoga*. She received it with great pleasure, saying that she was anxious to read about Sri Gurudev's teachings! I kissed her goodbye with thanksgiving in my heart, to God and Guru, for the blessing of my having once again contacted such an extraordinary being. She expressed how I had done so much for her by my visit—but I was the one who felt inspired. From her sweet presence, my heart was left completely at rest and at Peace.

Returning to the Ashram by bus, watching God's beautiful landscapes whirl past, my heart overflowed with gratitude for the blessings showered upon me in the form of my beloved Gurudev whose teachings have brought such joy into my life. He is healing all the old wounds and making my life whole once again!

I pray that all others whose lives have been torn apart through misunderstanding and nonacceptance may find, as I did, Peace restored to their hearts through the teachings of Yoga.



JAYARAJAN RASIAH and PADMARANI RASIAH

of the FINE ARTS SOCIETY, Kandy, Sri Lanka (Ceylon)

Bharata Natyam is a unique, ancient dance form of South India and among the most subtle and graceful styles of dance art in the world. The drama of Bharata Natyam unfolds through the language of gesture and the rhythm of dancing feet within a delicate weaving of musical nuance. Through an outer expression of intense and uplifting emotion, the dancer reaches an inner attunement with Creation. The audience, too, goes beyond the outer form, perhaps to reach sublime realms of the human Spirit.

Masters of Indian Classical Dance on US Tour

At the invitation of the Satchidananda Ashrams and Integral Yoga Institutes, Jayarajan and his sister, Padmarani Rasiah, will travel half way around the globe to present Bharata Natyam Dance to the American public. The Rasiahs, highly skilled and gifted performers of this South Indian classical dance, began their intricate training almost eighteen years ago and have performed in Sri Lanka and India for the past twelve years.

Engagements from September, 1979 through February, 1980 are currently being organized through Satchidananda Ashram - Yogaville East. Your local Integral Yoga Institute will have details on locations and dates.

Proceeds from the tour will go toward the building of the L.O.T.U.S., the Light of Truth Universal Shrine, which will be dedicated to the essential Oneness of all religions.

You are invited to arrange a program of cultural and spiritual entertainment to be presented in your community and, in this way, also share in the growth of the L.O.T.U.S. For information on co-sponsoring a performance or class in your area, please contact: Swami Jnanananda Ma, Coordinator, Indian Dance Tour - U.S.A., c/o Satchidananda Ashram, PO Box 108, Pomfret Center, Ct. 06259. Telephone (203) 974-1005.

Since 1972, Padmarani has been a senior teacher at the Fine Arts Society, which was founded by the Satchidananda Ashram Thapovanam in Kandy, Sri Lanka. The Society was under the direct guidance of Sri Gurudev for many years and he has been its President since its inception in 1964. Mrs. Rukmini Rasiah, director of the Fine Arts Society, and also mother of the brother and sister team, will be accompanying them on the tour.

Fun with Hatha Yoga

Prahaladan Mandelkorn

Prahaladan Mandelkorn, who is presently serving as national Teachers' Coordinator, has been a student of Sri Swami Satchidananda for the past ten years. Here, he shares his understanding of Sri Gurudev's teachings and from his own experience.

We can enjoy *Hatha Yoga* as long as we live. No doubt, the many fruits from this delightful branch on the tree of Yogic practices are sufficient motivation to learn and continue these teachings. "*Ha-tha*", or "*Sun-Moon*" Yoga combines the third and fourth rungs of the ladder of Raja Yoga. It helps us uncover our innate radiant health by making our bodies supple, cleaning our blood, reactivating and harmonizing the endocrine glands, purifying our nervous systems, releasing any blocks of tension and thus eliminating stress.

Hatha Yoga helps cure all physical ailments and, in time, will free us of the cravings for cigarettes, coffee, alcohol, and other toxic substances.

Hatha is the science by which we may harmonize the sun and moon energies—the positive and negative currents in each of us—so we may recognize our oneness with all life and the entire cosmos.

Many already know of these benefits, because early on they became enthusiastic about *Hatha Yoga* when they were beginning students. But how easy it is to "fall off the horse" and let our regular practice slip. Sometimes it seems difficult to get back up happily and go on again. Here then are some light suggestions to help rekindle that early enthusiasm, and continue—this time further than ever before with both steadiness and regularity. And this time you might taste even more of the fruits of *hatha* practice.

TAKE IT EASY

Remember that *Hatha Yoga*, like all spiritual practices, can and should be fun. "Take it easy", Sri Gurudev tells us again and again. "Life itself is

play." You should be serious sometimes, but be lighthearted at the same time. So often we make a chore out of spiritual practices, like forcing ourselves to do calisthenics or homework. Then it's just a matter of time until the mind rebels—and we fall off the horse. That is, we lose the regular rhythm of our daily practices.

Of course, it's more beneficial to be regular in our practices—to persevere for a long time. Still, *Hatha Yoga* shouldn't be an obsession. When time is limited, Gurudev suggests, just do about half of the postures that you normally do, then continue the next day where you left off. Also, if you come to a moment during the *hatha* practices when you feel very peaceful and meditative, he advises us simply to stop the postures. Just stay in that lovely mood and enjoy the peace. Sit and meditate. Think how often you might have pressed on to "finish" your postures when you were already feeling uplifted and peaceful. So, let go of any obsessions and preconceived ideas about how it "has to be done".

KEEP THE CHAIN GOING

Practice *hatha* regularly in the morning soon after rising. (Unless you rise *before* dawn—then sit in meditation first, taking advantage of that *sattwic* or tranquil period of the day.) Practicing at the same time every day builds discipline and will power. If you skip *hatha* in the morning, it's easy to lose the opportunity altogether. The day

can become so full of duties and appointments that suddenly it's late at night and there just wasn't time for those intended practices. Even with all this as a guideline, it's still good to vary your practice once in a while. Try practicing in the evening when you're feeling looser and can do the postures with more ease and flexibility.

Whatever the case, keep the chain going. If the day has slipped by and you didn't have time to do all the practices you intended, don't fret and think you failed. Even if you're just getting to bed at two in the morning, stop for three minutes and do a couple of Sun-Salutations, or simply sit for a few minutes of deep, three-part breathing. Keep the chain going. That way you don't slip back. Then, when the pace of your daily life slows down a little, you can grow quickly from where you were before.

Remember that *hatha* isn't a science to make you into an acrobat, a muscleman, or a glamorous woman. True, it sometimes brings these results if practiced with that intention. However, the most satisfying benefits of *hatha* are cleaning the body and calming the mind, so we can realize our ever-joyful nature which is experienced when we aren't focusing so much on our bodies or our individual selves.

When time is short, Gurudev reminds us that it's all right to cut down on the postures, but always leave time for some Deep Relaxation and a few minutes of breathing practices, *pranayama*. How often people

seem to think that, to save time, they'll just do the postures and skip the rest. That's like mixing all the ingredients for a cake and not putting it in the oven. The postures free the *pranic* energy to make natural adjustments wherever it is needed in the system. Nerve centers and psychic plexuses open up and the endocrine glands are massaged internally to emit the right hormones. All of these, and even more subtle effects, culminate during *Yoga Nidra*, the Deep Relaxation which is a Yogic sleep with awareness. At this time you can consciously withdraw from body and mind awareness. By observing the breath and thoughts you may then find your true identity as the Witness, that observing, infinite Self. After practicing *Hatha Yoga* in combination with *Yoga Nidra* for some time, experiences during the relaxation become revelations for expanding consciousness and provide insights in our daily lives. Deep relaxation is a reservoir of peace and equanimity which you can draw on during the rest of the day.

LOOSE REINS

Why not get back on that faithful charger again. Practice *hatha* regularly, even if it's just ten or twenty minutes every day, or five or six days a week. Take a day off sometimes. "Don't ever go to your limit," says Gurudev, "and you'll never reach your limit". Ride your horse with the reins loose. Don't always press yourself against a wall. Life

does that enough as it is. Stop when you would still like a little more. If you can practice seven days a week, then practice for six days. If you could go for an hour-and-a-half of *hatha*, try doing only an hour-and-a-quarter. Even in reaching to perfect a posture, don't go to your limit. "Never strain", says the master, and keep the breathing easy throughout.

Except for the Shoulder Stand, Posterior Stretching, and the Head Stand, one minute each is all you need for the postures to acquire all the benefits and bring steady growth. As you progress, cut down on variations which are more to keep the mind fascinated than for your development. "A good *Hatha Yogi*", says Gurudev, "does fewer variations than someone less advanced". His practice has become simpler and he needs less rest between the poses because he never strains, thus never accumulating tension which would need to be released later. The "more advanced" *Yogi* perfects his form and steadiness, watching his mind and thoughts during the entire *hatha* session which has now become a meditation. During each posture, he either focuses his mind on a specific location in the body, concentrates on the benefits, or repeats a *mantra*. Thus, the *asanas* will bear fruit more quickly.

GET UP AND GO ON

Of course it's useful to refamiliarize yourself with the benefits of each posture, and to study the other techniques of *Hatha Yoga*. Sri Gurudev's

exceptional and authoritative explanation of this great science may be found in *Integral Yoga Hatha*, by Yogiraj Sri Swami Satchidananda, published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. This book is an endless fount of Yogic wisdom, with enough subtleties to keep even the most avid *Hatha* Yoga enthusiast spellbound for ages.

Finally, if you fail—get up and go on. If you've stopped practicing as regularly as you did previously, don't be discouraged. This has happened to many of us even after years of regular practice. You'll be pleased to see that you can get going quickly and soon grow far beyond where you left off. But you have to get going to do it.

By using some of these tricks to keep the spiritual practices playful, you can

surely enjoy the benefits. And, as you advance in your practice, you can drop some of the milder postures while adding more advanced ones. Don't ever think that anything is too difficult for you. Just approach it one step at a time. Little by little, you will master even the most advanced practices—as you are mastering yourself.

The key is to keep practicing. Find any way to make a nice game of it, but keep on doing it. Keep calming the mind and purifying the body so the inner light can shine through unimpeded. One day, you may even want to become a *hatha* teacher to help others experience the joys you have found.

Remember Gurudev's advice—take it easy and have fun with your practice.

The House of Hope

(continued from page 11)

And there are others who will indeed build. Fearful of being on the way, they entrench themselves. They clearly shape their hopes but, clinging desperately to these very hopes, in the end they lose all hope. True Hope shines bright as a star above a shipwreck after all our other hopes have sunk. If we confuse our transient hopes with the real Hope, we build so tight a roof that we can no longer see the stars. God's mercy will have to break up that roof above us.

When I meet drifters, I admire in them the courage it

takes to keep moving. When I see builders, even the builders of far too-solid walls, I admire their courage to build. Isn't it asking too much that one should have the courage for both? Yet, nothing short of it will do for men and women of hope.

That is what we must do if the whole earth is to become "a house of prayer for all the peoples" (*Isaiah 56:7*).

"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (*Psalms 127:1*), and the plans of the Divine Architect are as far beyond all our planning as True Hope is beyond our ordinary hopes.

More Letters



(Continued from page 3)

Holy Mantram and may I ask your blessing that I may grow in faith, devotion, and trusting patience.

-Devotedly,
Sister Joan Metzner,
Maryknoll, New York

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY
SALVATION

Disclose yourself
Expose yourself
To the LIGHT

Self-revealing
Heart healing
LIGHT

Divest yourself
Come rest yourself
In the LIGHT

Soul blinding
God finding
LIGHT

-Sister Joan

Our seventeen-year old brother passed away, apparently of a mysterious allergic reaction. You didn't know him, but he was a distant admirer of yours, as are my sister and myself. We wondered if we could ask you to give him your blessings, as well as any words of solace you

might care to offer our parents. We would be very much indebted to you for any small assistance in this very difficult time.

-M. & D. B., Great Neck, N. Y.

Sri Gurudev responds:

Dear Children,

I am sorry to know of the passing away of your dear brother. May his soul find Peace. I am keeping him in my thoughts and prayers.

Remember the soul never dies. It is immortal. Only this body dies. Love never dies. The love and joy you shared with him is always there. Remember that. Only do not dwell on past experiences.

When our work here is over we all must follow God's plan. Nothing can change that. The Divine is working behind all acts, only we must have the eyes to see that and to accept His will. Have faith in the Lord, you will find that peace and understanding.

All that you can do for him now is to pray for the peace of his soul. Let your love for him grow to encompass all mankind. Do selfless service in his name.

God bless you.

Ever Yours in the Lord,
Swami Satchidananda

Even the bad is part of it too,
Not only the good is coming to you
Accept it all with loving embrace,
Let it all be real,
Let it all be grace.

-Narayana Pruitt,
Santa Barbara, Ca.

DAY-BY-DAY WITH SRI GURUDEV

February - April 1979



UNIVERSITY WITHOUT WALLS

On February 25, Sri Gurudev spoke at the Montecito Community Center in Santa Barbara at a talk sponsored by World University. As he began speaking, one could feel a wave of response flow through the audience although many of them had never heard him before.

Gurudev asked them to think about how we have a tendency to by-pass our problems rather than going to the root cause, giving the example of by-pass heart surgery. He asked them to try to balance themselves through right living, chanting, and other Yogic practices.

The small hall was packed full of people, and many were sitting on the hard, uncarpeted floor. Yet, till the end, the people pressed for more time, asking questions and receiving his attentive and patient replies.

-Krishnadasi Mouw and Ganga

Marceaux, Santa Barbara, Cal.

LIGHT SHOW

On Saturday night, March 3, at the Santa Barbara Unitarian Church in California, Sri Gurudev shared a video film sent by the children of the Light of Yoga School in the Connecticut Ashram. The theme was from *Star Wars*, but the main character was God. As Sri Gurudev pointed out, the program was *written and produced by the children*. One guest, Mr. Bob Buritz, the father of our Bhagavan Buritz from Hawaii, expressed his astonishment at the remarkable composure and maturity of the children. At the end of the program, Gurudev proudly commented that you don't

really need to teach anyone anything if you simply provide the right environment.

When a member of the audience stated that the video lights were glaring, we had a wonderful opportunity to see Sri Gurudev's equanimity in action. Rather than deciding anything immediately, he remained completely neutral. Quickly delineating the problem for the audience, he then presented the choices. "Either the people who would like to enjoy this talk in the future must sacrifice, or you must sacrifice." Though most seemed to feel that they would like to make that sacrifice and allow the lights to remain, the person who initially complained remained adamant. In the meantime, Gurudev quickly directed the cameramen so that, in the end, the lights were adjusted to everyone's satisfaction.

WRONG NUMBER

Continuing his discourse with a high energy, he spoke about the necessity of emotional control. Even "if you jump with joy, you're already disturbed. If I'm a rogue and somebody calls me that, then I get angry, otherwise I simply say, 'Sorry, you have the wrong number'".

Later he described dying as, "when your shirt gets a few holes", and death, "when you discard the shirt". He compared the body to a mobile home with a kitchen, video system, radio, office, battery, toilet, and so on, reminding us gently after much laughter that, though the body is expendable, the composition of mind and Self, which is the

Soul, continues on.

REPLENISHING THE ENERGY

On March 10, while doing work at Gurudev's home in La Paz, Karunananda Ma, a long-time student, asked a question about "energy transformation through spiritual practice". Sri Gurudev replied that, "Most of our problems come from thinking about them. We should be so busy that we don't have time ever to think about them." (Sri Gurudev asked that this message be conveyed to all the I.Y.I.'s and Ashrams.)

Later, at a business meeting, he advised her further. We should not be so concerned with esoteric questions. "If you have any extra energy—just get down and use it to scrub the floor."

Q.&A. SWAMI

Inside the Unitarian Church that evening, Gurudev recounted how, in Sri Lanka, he had been known as the "Question-and-Answer-Swami". He used to give private interviews, but has since

Serenaded by West Coast devotees.

encouraged everyone to come to *satsangs*, because he found that so many people were asking the same questions and others could benefit from hearing the answer.

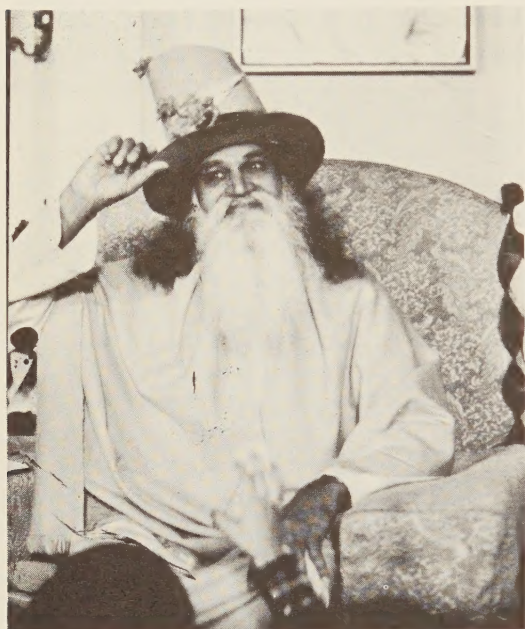
Then a few words on attachment: "I am not really happy to be leaving [California]. All the plants are blooming. The beautiful flowering plants seem to be telling me, 'Hey, are you really going?' Every day, when I see nature's beauty I get a little attached. How wonderfully Gurudev teaches us that detachment isn't indifference to the human experience, but that detachment means simply not to get caught up in it.

Gurudev then brings the lesson home. "But, if you give up something you don't like, whom are you cheating? You may be able to give up your attachment to the Yoga practices; can you give up your overeating?"

"Good company is anything you can easily stay away from. Bad company is that which won't leave you even if you don't want it."

-Krishnadasi Mouw





Irish Rishi

At Yogaville East on March 17, Sri Gurudev attended a Saint Patrick's Day party combined with a birthday party for all those born in March. Performances of music were offered by the Condylis family, the *Yoga Sutras* sung by the New York Institute members, "*Know You are the Cause*" by Swami Asokananda, and the Ashram Choir.

Swamiji was presented with a shamrock pin and a hat. He remarked that whoever says, "I am a *Rishi* (sage)" is "I-rish", and that Ireland is *Ayer* (sage) land. Sri Gurudev explained how "Life is really like a riddle that you try and figure out. You try to get an answer, and when you finally say, "I give up", you get the answer. That is the truth behind all the spiritual practices. We don't need to give up everything, and at the same time we must."

LOOK IT UP, WRITE IT DOWN

Swamiji then told us about a question he had been asked in California: "Is it better to be a monk or to be married?" After all these years, he told us, we seem to be still asking the same questions. He compared it to dialing "0" for operator rather than looking for the available information in the directory. We don't seem to use the available resources (books, video tapes, audio tapes, Senior Members) to get our questions answered. However, the "operator" (Sri Gurudev) is available for new students and new questions.

MONK OR MARRIED

The answer that Sri Gurudev gave to the previous question was that "God Realization is not available to only one or to the other. Unfortunately, however, some marry or take *sannyas* because they feel that, 'the Swami is expecting me to do this'. If it feels right, do it; otherwise don't. A Guru is not a dictator, but a guide."

STARS ARE BORN

On March 24, the students of the Integral Yoga School gave a performance of a play called "The Juggler of Our Lady". The setting was medieval Europe and the costumes were all hand-made. Beautifully directed by Valli Milstein and assisted by Karuna Binstock, it was the story of a poor juggler in a monastery. Having nothing but his juggling act, he offered it to the Statue of Our Lady, after which she bestowed a blessing.

That same evening, Meera Alexander taught us a song, "Master, Show Me the Way" and Kalyana Yarusso did a slide show about the school. The upper-school children then led us in a chant, and one, Usha Morosi, sang a solo. Shanthi also showed slides of Gurudev's travels to New Zealand, Fiji, and Hawaii during the past winter.

Sri Gurudev then expressed how the Integral Yoga School had really surpassed all his expectations. He praised the work of the teachers because, through their dedication and the proper atmosphere provided by them, the real teaching has been taking place. He also acknowledged the parents who had the confidence to bring their children and to cooperate and work together with the teachers.

THE PATH OF SANNYAS

For those students who are not in the monastic order, it is difficult to always understand what it is to be a monk. At a recent *satsang*, Swamiji spoke about the Sannyas path. Often we, who mostly are not monks, don't realize the importance of giving proper respect to the Sannyas Order because of the lack of

understanding.

Swamiji reminded us once again of what the monks are trying to achieve, and how difficult it is to put aside a personal life for one of total, public service. He then reminded the monks that, at the same time, they should not demand respect. Because they have nothing, they should be humility personified. Sri Gurudev also pointed out that though the monks make mistakes, as any human being may, we should not forget that they are trying to do something great, and for this they, and the Order, deserve respect always.

ON OBEDIENCE

When asked for clarification about the meaning of "obedience", Gurudev said that there must be some faith and trust, not just blind obedience. In the beginning, the student may not be completely convinced, though he or she will still try to follow the teachings. "Ultimately", Gurudev said, "you must be convinced. Until then, you are obedient because of faith alone. Then, when you are convinced, obedience becomes your aim."

-Mukta Devi, Pomfret Center, Ct.

Detroit Symposium on Humanity

On March 30 through April 1, Detroit was blessed by two simultaneous and inter-related events: the Detroit Symposium and Sri Gurudev's active participation.

He was a beautiful cohesive force throughout the weekend, serving as a reminder of our Inner Peace. During the first all-Symposium session, the hall was filled with excitement and

anticipation as people met each other and visited the exhibits. When Gurudev was introduced, he slowly and quietly moved to center stage, and the buzz of activity entirely ceased. His peaceful presence permeated the atmosphere. He told us that anything without "peace" falls to "pieces". He also expressed his hope and prayer that, "the Symposium can bring a little

light in our hearts so that we can rise above these man-made divisions to find the spirit in us and see the same in everybody."

He also spoke specifically about the L.O.T.U.S. project, which is dedicated to the Universal Light and to the essential truth which is stated in various ways according to the different traditions.

During his closing address, Gurudev said that, "We can make any place a heaven and probably even a heaven into a hell, because it is all within us. If we feel that oneness, if we feel that we are peaceful and happy with everybody, we are in heaven."

A few minutes later, Sri

Gurudev said with such total joy that his entire body shook with elation, "I am sure that Jesus, Moses, Allah, Buddha are all jumping with joy! 'Look at our children! They are all together today here!'" Yes! Sri Gurudev is purity. At that moment he was pure joy!

Several Symposium leaders expressed their gratitude for Sri Gurudev's presence. Yusef Barakat, the General Manager, presented him with a large, very beautiful photograph of Gurudev taken by a Detroit photographer. In receiving it, Sri Gurudev quipped, "You have given me the greatest gift, myself." Many of us feel that it is he who is showing us our Selves.

-Swami Amarananda, Detroit, Mich.

Roundtable of the Light

For the second time, Gurudev was requested to be the main speaker at Miami's Round Table of the Light Conference. The chief organizers, Mr. Mory Cutler and Mr. Stan Goudreau, welcomed him and requested that he sit for a few minutes in their meditation room to "charge" it for the April 6-8 weekend conference.

He then spoke on Peace. We already have the "key to peace", he said, if we turn it in the right way. By thinking good thoughts, keeping good company, and eating the right foods, we are able to open the door. "It's up to you", he said, "which way you want to turn your key. Nobody keeps you locked up!"

Devi Dasi Micelli arranged a talk for the Hindu community. That night Gurudev joined some of his students for a visit to

the Miami Planetarium. After seeing the multi-media show (and examining the equipment), he ascended to the roof for a telescopic view of Saturn and the Earth's moon. Making fast friends with the astronomers, he handled the complicated telescopes as they eagerly explained what we were seeing.

One of his long-time devotees, Manu Margolin, came up for a birthday blessing. As we were leaving, one of the scientists thanked Gurudev for coming, saying that he, too, felt blessed by the visit. In soft tones, Gurudev thanked the scientist for his service. Then, gently bowing as he turned to leave, I could hear him ever-so-softly saying to the scientist that all the stars and planets should continue to light his way and bless him on his path.

-Shanthi, Pomfret